

What do they do at the Abilene Public Library?

Deborah Tarsiewicz, Special to the Reporter-News

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(Photo: david franklin)

Regardless of which Abilene Public Library branch you enjoy visiting, or whether you like to spend 20 minutes or the whole day with us, you may have noticed a wide variety of staff performing an intriguing array of tasks. You may well be wondering just what it is that we do here in the library. Is all of the staff the same? Does each person have specific tasks? A few of you might even be interested enough to want to pursue a career in libraries.

The staff of the Abilene Public Library includes our City Librarian (Director), Branch Managers, Librarians, Library Assistants and Pages. Our City Librarian oversees all branch locations. Part of being a director is assessing how we do things and making them even better for our patrons, such as the changes to the Main

Branch second floor or making it possible to pay library charges with credit cards. Our Branch Managers make sure that the South and Mockingbird Branches run smoothly.

Librarians do many different tasks, such as help patrons with research by using catalogs and databases to find materials or information for anyone who asks and on just about any topic. They might also have special projects like organizing our yearly Summer Reading Clubs or Lib-Con. Technical Services Librarians make sure new materials keep flowing into the library and that they are cataloged correctly so they can be found.

Library Assistants also work directly with the public. They might help you locate materials such as DVDs, check materials out to you, or pretty much deal with anything involving patron accounts. Our Pages make sure materials get back to the shelves promptly and accurately. They also check the shelves on a regular basis to make sure no materials have been misplaced. You can visit our webpage <http://www.abilenetx.com/apl> to find more information about many of our friendly and helpful staff.

To learn more about working in a library, you are more than welcome to ask our staff any questions that you might have about their duties and training. The library also has many books on hand that you might enjoy looking through that go into more detail about how to pursue a career in libraries and what to expect once you find your dream job.

A great place to start is the "The Whole Library Handbook 5: Current Data, Professional Advice, and Curiosa About Libraries and Library Services" edited by George M. Eberhart. Robert Dawson's "The Public Library" offers a wonderful variety of photographs of libraries interwoven with letters, essays and poems by writers such as Isaac Asimov and Amy Tan, all in celebration of libraries.

"Making the Most of your Library Career," by Lois Stickell, offers insight from career professionals about what it is really like in the library trenches. In the same vein is "What They Don't Teach You in Library School" by Elisabeth Doucett, which, as the title hints, covers relevant topics library workers are sure to face in their day-to-day jobs.

Whether you dream of the day when you will work in a library, or if what goes on in your library fascinates you, your Abilene Public Library has resources that will provide an answer to nearly any library related question. So stop in today and let our staff share with you their library knowledge, skill and experiences.

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